



Congresswoman **Lois Capps**

REPORTS TO YOU



Dear Friends:

For the past several weeks, our nation has been responding to the unspeakable terrorist attacks of September 11.

Words cannot adequately express the shock, sorrow, and anger we continue to feel about these horrendous crimes and the loss of so many of our fellow Americans.

I have visited the rubble of the World Trade Center as well as the Pentagon. Standing at these sites, one is struck with two conflicting emotions – overwhelming grief for the victims and tremendous pride for the heroism of the rescue workers.

The day after the attacks, members of Congress spoke on the House floor. I said that while the terrorists destroyed our buildings and killed many of our brothers and sisters, they did not destroy our American spirit. They will never defeat our resolve. And they cannot undermine the principles of freedom and democracy that undergird our society.

This newsletter describes a number of the ways Congress and President Bush are working together to deal with the security and economic issues that confront us – including doing our best to keep Americans safe from the ongoing bio-terrorism attacks.

During these difficult times, communication is particularly important. Please feel free to access my web site (www.house.gov/capps) for updated information. The best way to reach us now is by e-mail, which can be accessed through my site or by visiting www.house.gov/writerep. If you have immediate concerns, or don't have access to e-mail, please don't hesitate to call one of my four offices.

Sincerely,

Lois Capps

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

Lois Capps visited the World Trade Center site shortly after September 11. She has voted for emergency assistance for the communities hit hardest by this tragedy.



Confronting Bio-Terrorism

The recent anthrax attacks have made an already anxious nation even more nervous about our ability to deal with serious public health threats. These assaults have struck close to home – causing my Capitol Hill office to shut down for three weeks while we worked from a temporary office.

It is an urgent priority for Congress and the Administration to ensure our nation is able to respond to these anthrax attacks and any future bio-terrorist events.

As a member of the Homeland Security Task Force of the Democratic Caucus, I have been working on comprehensive proposals to meet this challenge, and am one of the authors of the Bio-terrorism Protection Act of 2001.

This bill contains key provisions from my legislation to address our growing nursing shortage as well as other key public health staffing needs. A strong health care safety net is absolutely indispensable when our public health is threatened (turn to page 2 for more details on the nursing shortage).

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Congress Responds

Taking on the Nursing Shortage

Even before September 11, it was clear that a nursing shortage posed great danger to our nation's health care system. In California, for example, there are 20,000 fewer nurses than we need. And there aren't enough new nurses joining the workforce.

The terrorist attacks and anthrax assaults have focused even more attention on the need to confront this looming problem. Nurses were among the first responders at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and are on the front lines of our ongoing battle against bio-terrorism. We need to deal with this shortage to make sure our public health infrastructure is prepared for disasters of all types.

As one of three former nurses in Congress, I am especially proud that my bill, the Nurse Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1436), is supported by



Lois Capps is joined by Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle at a press conference announcing the introduction of her bill, the Nurse Reinvestment Act. Char Hill, a Santa Maria nurse, is second from the left.

over half the members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Nurse Reinvestment Act would establish a National Nurse

Service Corps that would provide educational scholarships in exchange for a commitment to work in a health care facility where there is a nursing shortage. Among other provisions, it would also provide public service announcements to promote the nursing profession.

On a related note, I have been working to ensure that doctors and hospitals are able to continue providing care to Central Coast residents.

Misguided Medicare policies threaten to cut physician payments by 5% next year and Medicare HMOs serving the Central Coast are still reimbursed less than those serving nearby areas. For several years, I have fought to increase payments to Medicare HMOs serving San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties and am leading efforts in Congress to stop the cuts to physicians.

Getting Our Economy Back on Track

The attacks of September 11 rocked an already weakening economy. Congress has taken steps to put us back on strong economic footing, but there is much more to do.

Immediately following the attacks, Congress approved a \$40 billion emergency appropriations bill to fund rescue, recovery, and initial rebuilding efforts. This was quickly followed by the passage of legislation to provide critical assistance to our nation's airlines.

I voted for the airline bill because our economy can ill afford the consequences of carriers going bankrupt. But I was also promised that Congress would quickly take up legislation to assist the hundreds of thousands of employees of the airlines and related industries that have lost their jobs. It is uncon-

scionable that this important bill has not been passed.

Since September 11, I have met with many workers across the Central Coast who have lost their jobs. These are people who have contributed a great deal to our local economy and don't deserve to be left out in the cold. With these folks in mind, I cosponsored the Displaced Workers Assistance Act. This bill would provide extra unemployment insurance, continued health care coverage, and job training for eligible workers. It's the least the federal government can do for those thrown out of work as a direct result of the terrorist attacks.

The worker assistance package should have been included in the so-called "economic stimulus" bill recently passed by the House. It

wasn't. And to make matters worse, this bill was loaded up with massive tax breaks aimed primarily at major corporations and other special interests. I opposed this legislation because it won't help our economy rebound quickly and poses great danger to our long-term economic interests.

I am an original cosponsor of an alternative economic recovery bill. My proposal provides the unemployment and health care benefits to needy workers as described above. It also offers tax cuts to people who didn't receive the entire previous rebate and to businesses to encourage new investment. And it provides significant funding for crucial areas like aviation and rail security, small business development, and school infrastructure.

To September 11

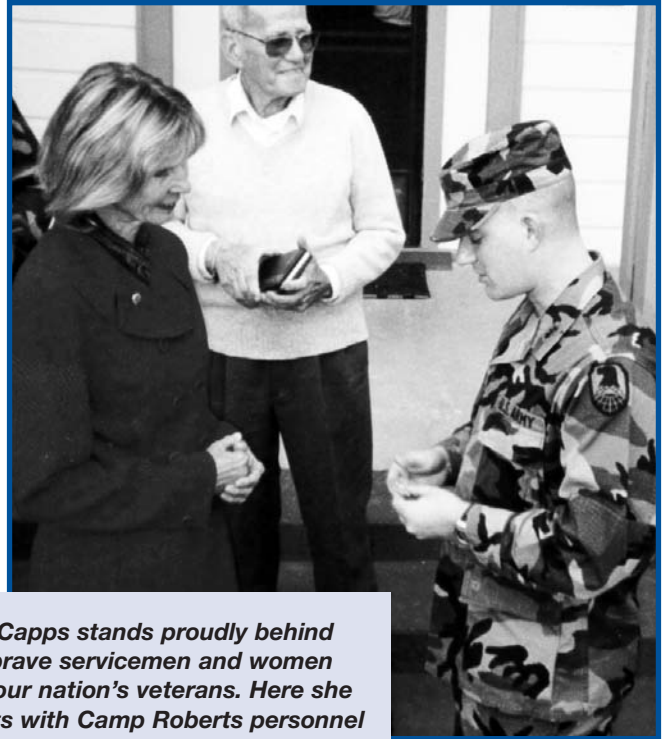
Capps Introduces September 11 Families Stamp Act

Speaking on the House floor on September 12, I said “through the darkness and horror came the bright light of American courage, goodness and strength.” Indeed, the generosity of our fellow citizens for the victims and their families has been truly amazing.

Congress has the obligation to enable and magnify this generosity. For that reason, I introduced the September 11 Families Stamp Act. This bipartisan bill would establish a commemorative stamp to raise money to assist the families of the victims.

Modeled on the successful Breast Cancer Research stamp, this stamp would cost six cents more than a regular first class stamp. The extra money raised would be distributed by a special office of the Department of Justice. H.R. 2907 has over 160 cosponsors, and I’m hopeful this bill will be passed quickly.

The September 11 stamp would not only help these families confront their financial challenges, but would give people all over the country a simple way to honor the memory of the thousands who lost their lives that terrible day.



Lois Capps stands proudly behind our brave servicemen and women and our nation’s veterans. Here she meets with Camp Roberts personnel to discuss national security.

Strengthening Our National Security

Since September 11, the paramount concern of most Americans is ensuring that another catastrophic terrorist attack does not occur. Providing our nation the security we need is a battle being fought on several fronts – through military and diplomatic efforts, law enforcement, and strengthened domestic security.

Thousands of brave American servicemen and women are now in harm’s way. I stand completely behind our troops and support their mission to cripple the al Qaeda terrorist network. Voting to authorize the use of armed force is one of the most difficult decisions facing a member of Congress, but I voted for S. J. Res. 23, which provided Congressional approval for military action.

After much deliberation, I also voted for H.R. 2975, comprehensive anti-terrorism legislation. This bill gives law enforcement agencies new authority to investigate and conduct surveillance on suspected terrorists. The bill will modernize our capacity to tap suspects’ phone lines and trace Internet and financial activities. There are some civil liberties concerns about this legislation, and I am pleased that these new laws will “sunset” – or expire – after four years so Congress is forced to reexamine them.

In the days after September 11, I toured Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and San Luis Obispo airports. The message was clear. Congress must enact a strong aviation security bill as quickly as possible – to prevent

more hijackings and ensure Americans that it is safe to fly. I am an original cosponsor and voted for the Transportation Security Enhancement Act. This bill would make baggage security and passenger screening a federal law enforcement responsibility. It would also authorize more federal air marshals, improve cabin and cockpit security, and enhance other security measures.

Although the Senate passed this bill 100-0, it was initially defeated in the House on a narrow partisan vote. This was wrong. The federal government must play a major role in airport security, and I’m pleased that the final version of this legislation contains strong security measures. The airline security bill just enacted is a victory for the American people.

Confronting Bio-Terrorism *continued from page 1*

One of the most important parts of the bill would provide grants to local communities to develop and update emergency response plans. I have met with Central Coast fire and police chiefs, emergency response leaders, and hospital administrators to discuss their needs. Our region is fortunate to have officials who plan ahead, but many communities are not as far along. And consistently updating these efforts is critical.

The legislation would help the Post Office mitigate threats posed by contaminated mail. It would also provide funds to ensure that we always have an adequate stock of vaccines, increase our research efforts into new vaccines, and expedite FDA approval of new products.

The threat of bio-terrorism is very real. While we may not be able to prepare for every eventuality, if we move quickly to implement common sense measures, we can greatly reduce the threat to our communities and our country.

Legislative Roundup

Although Congress has been dealing primarily with post-September 11 challenges, there are other important issues on my agenda. Here is a brief summary of some key Congressional matters affecting the Central Coast.

Improving Education

Congress is poised to pass an historic bipartisan education reform bill, the No Child Left Behind Act. This bill will give local school districts more flexibility, while also demanding more accountability and better performance. Included in this measure is a bill I authored – the Teaching Children to Save Lives Act – to help provide CPR instruction in schools. In these uncertain times, it is critical to teach children lifesaving skills as early as possible.

I have also introduced two other education bills. The Teacher Technology Training Act (H.R. 573) would help local school districts provide classroom related computer training to their teachers. And the Access to Aid Act (H.R. 772) would respond to the high cost of higher education by helping students find financial aid.

Protecting the Environment

I continue to oppose new oil drilling off the Central Coast and have introduced the Coastal States Protection Act to ban new drilling in federal waters where a state moratorium is in effect. A federal court recently ruled that the 36 oil leases off our coast could not be developed without the state's approval. Unfortunately, the U.S. Justice Department is opposing this verdict. I am leading the California Congressional delegation's efforts to support this ruling and preserve local decision-making.

Some in Congress are using the current crisis to push for more oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I oppose this effort, and have voted to encourage better energy efficiency in our cars, homes, and businesses. I have also passed legislation to help local communities across the Central Coast clean up sites contaminated by the fuel additive MTBE.

Priorities for our Community

As Congress makes its funding decisions for next year, I am working hard to strengthen the economic viability of the Central Coast.

In the water projects bill just signed into law, I was able to help obtain \$3.8 million to dredge Morro Bay Harbor and \$400,000 to continue the Morro Bay Estuary Project. An additional \$2 million to dredge Santa Barbara Harbor and \$100,000 for a key Santa Barbara – Ventura counties shoreline study were also approved.

Working with local officials, I secured funding for important transportation projects, including \$4 million for Santa Barbara's electric buses, \$500,000 for the Santa Barbara Electric Transit Institute, \$245,000 for improvements to the Ortega Street Pedestrian Overcross and \$400,000 for the Lewis Avenue Bridge in Atascadero.

Important Phone Numbers & Web Sites

Federal Government First Click
www.firstgov.org

Information about Anthrax and Public Health
Centers for Disease Control
www.bt.cdc.gov

Handling your Mail
U.S. Postal Service
www.usps.gov

Donating Blood
American Red Cross
www.redcross.org
1-800-448-3543

Support for the Families of the Victims
Federal Emergency Management Administration
www.fema.gov

Reporting Terrorist Activity
U.S. Justice Department
1-866-483-5137

Federal Bureau of Investigation
www.ifccfbi.gov

Reporting Hate Crimes
State of California Anti-Discrimination Hotline
1-866-460-4357

Air Travel Updates
Federal Aviation Administration
www.faa.gov

Santa Barbara County
www.countyofsb.org

San Luis Obispo County
www.co.slo.ca.us

How to Contact Congresswoman Capps

1118 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515-0522
(202) 225-3601

1411 Marsh Street, Suite 205
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 546-8348

1428 Chapala Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 730-1710

910 E. Stowell Road, Suite 111
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 349-9313

E-mail web address:
www.house.gov/writerep

Web site: www.house.gov/capps

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Lois Capps

M.C.
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